



Upper Sacramento Scheduling Team Flow Smoothing Coordination

Tuesday, September 5, 2023, 10–11 a.m.

Meeting Summary

Members Attending

- CDFW: Doug Killam, Erica Meyers
- DWR: Kevin Reece,
- Kearns & West: Eva Spiegel, Terra Alpaugh
- Reclamation: Elissa Buttermore, Lisa Elliot, Tom Patton
- NMFS: Stephan Maurano, Evan Sawyer, Garwin Yip
- NMFS, SWFSC: Eric Danner
- SWRCB: Craig Williams, Jeff Laird, Michael Macon
- SRSC: Lee Bergfeld, Yuen Lenh
- USFWS: Matt Brown, Claudia Bucheli, Craig Flemming,
- Yurok Tribe: Chris Laskodi

Action Items

- Based on the group's discussion and recommendation:
 - **Reclamation** will make flow reductions over the upcoming weekend – 100 cfs each on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights for a total of 300 cfs reduction to 7,700 cfs as measured at KES.
 - **Pacific State Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC)** monitoring team will assess redd dewatering impacts on Monday (9/11) and CDFW will report to the group by Monday afternoon, so that the USST can discuss further reductions on the Tuesday call.
- In response to the discrepancy between flows as measured at the KES and KWK gages,
 - **Reclamation** will inquire about plans to reevaluate flows at KWK
 - **CDFW** will do a historical comparison of KES and KWK flow measurements in order to create a cheat sheet to compare measurements between the two.

- **Reclamation** will overlay KES flows over the shallow redd data, so that the USST can see when to expect dewatering based on KES flows.
- **Kearns & West** will plan to deliver a process update at the September SRTTG meeting to explain the process approach the USST has taken with respect to making recommendations directly to the Shasta Planning Group (SPG); i.e., that the USST will include SRTTG participants on its materials and distributions but will not schedule a separate SRTTG meeting prior to sending flow recommendations to the Shasta Planning Group.
 - **Kearns & West** will create a distribution list for only USST members to be used in revising recommendation language for the SPG, so that the whole SRTTG does not need to be included in the back-and-forth.

Action Item Update from 8/25/23 Meeting

- **Elissa Buttermore** (Reclamation) sent updated dewatering estimates prior to the 9/5/23 meeting.
- **Doug Killam** (CDFW) has shared his analysis of specific year expansion estimate factors with colleagues at CDFW. Once they respond, and if there is approval, he will share historical data back to 2005 with USST. A decision will need to be made on how to apply this information to the current year.
- **Kearns & West** drafted a recommendation to go to the SPG. USST members reviewed the draft and provided feedback. The final recommendation was sent to SPG for consideration. SPG members conferred via email and Kearns & West compiled their responses to share with USST. Responses are available in the 8/25/23 meeting summary and today's meeting agenda.

USST SPG Recommendation Process Discussion

Kearns & West noted that the recommended flow and dewatering numbers provided in the initial recommendation email to the SPG were incorrect; Elissa Buttermore, Reclamation, provided a follow-up email that made the correction: the USST recommended reducing flows to 8,000 cfs immediately; reducing flows to 9,000 cfs was anticipated to dewater 1 winter-run Chinook salmon redds and reducing flows to 8,000 cfs was anticipated to result in dewatering 5 redds. Via email, SPG members from USFWS, Reclamation, NMFS, and CDFW voiced support for the recommendation, which the USST assumes refers to the contents as outlined in the email and Reclamation's follow-up correction email. NMFS, supported by CDFW, also requested that moving forward the SPG is provided with specific details about estimate of the total winter-run Chinook salmon redd numbers and the cumulative number of redds that may be dewatered if a change order is being considered that would result in redd dewatering.

Representatives provided feedback on the process by which the recommendation was provided and SPG feedback, including:

- Because Kearns & West’s initial numbers were incorrect and then corrected by Reclamation, it was not totally clear whether the SPG responses were endorsing the “original” [KW] recommendations or the “revised” [Reclamation] numbers.
- It was also somewhat confusing as to how the SPG should determine consensus via email without replies from all members or a meeting and then communicate back to the USST.
- The USST recommendation email stated that “NMFS, CDFW, and USFWS made the following technical recommendations and DWR and SWRCB appreciated the discussion.” Reclamation was not mentioned. It was unclear whether there was consensus from the group.
- It remains unclear what the SRTTG’s role should be in the recommendation-making process. The Guidance Document is not clear about their involvement when the USST is making recommendations to inform real-time adaptive management.
- Emails from the USST go to all SRTTG members, which means that everyone receives a lot of extraneous emails when the group is editing via email.
- Regarding the NMFS request for updates, it could be hard to provide updates on redd dewatering for every incremental flow drop given constantly evolving information and the challenge of reconvening the USST that often.

The following were discussed and supported as future improvements:

- Kearns & West will ask in USST meetings for any agencies that are not “making” a recommendation to characterize their perspective (e.g., support, abstain, oppose), including a reason from abstaining or opposing, so that can be shared with the SPG.
- Kearns & West will do more explicit facilitating of the email conversation, such as checking in to confirm that corrections represent the consensus view.
- Kearns & West will compile a list of active participants who should be sent any recommendation language for editing, so that the full SRTTG list does not have to receive multiple drafts prior to seeing the final language.
- The USST will proceed with making their recommendations directly to the SPG but with a copy to the SRTTG. Kearns & West will provide an update to the SRTTG in September on this process to determine whether any SRTTG participants have concerns with this approach.
- The USST will provide updates to the SPG after any meeting in which their discussion suggests that the proposed flow schedule will dewater more redds than are anticipated by the current projections (at present, 5 redds are anticipated to be dewatered).

Fisheries Monitoring Update

Doug Killam (CDFW) reported that no redds are dewatered presently but one redd is close to being dewatered.

- PSMFC staff checked the redds both Friday and Saturday following earlier flow reductions.
- PSMFC staff reported today (September 5) that there are still no redds dewatered.
- He is using the KWK gauge, which is downstream of the Keswick Dam.

Adaptive Management

There are two gages measuring flows out of Keswick Dam: KES (at the dam) and KWK (3/4 of a mile downstream). However, the measurements they are giving differ by approximately 700 cfs at current flows, with KWK reporting the higher flows – despite there being no tributaries in the intervening reach. That discrepancy varies based on the total flow and may diminish as flows drop toward 5,000 cfs. Because there is more water in the system this year, flows are higher than normal, which has made the discrepancy more apparent.

CDFW uses the KWK gage for estimating flows that would likely dewater a given redd, and Reclamation uses KES to make operational adjustments. The result of this difference is that the redds that were anticipated to be dewatered at 8,000 cfs were not dewatered but probably will be dewatered when flows are reduced to 7,500 cfs as measured at the KES gage. To support navigating this difference, Reclamation will inquire about plans to reevaluate flows at KWK; CDFW will do a historical comparison of KES and KWK flow measurements in order to create a cheat sheet to compare measurements between the two; and Reclamation will overlay KES flows over the shallow redd data, so that the USST can see when to expect dewatering based on KES flows.

Doug Killam reported that the PSMFC monitoring staff are off Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and would prefer the flow drops not be scheduled those days. He also emphasized that it is not necessary to check redd status every 100 cfs drop at this point; checking every 250 to 300 cfs should be sufficient. USST members agreed that Reclamation should schedule flow reductions by 100 cfs the nights of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, so that monitoring of the 300 cfs change to 7,700 cfs can be done Monday morning, reported Monday afternoon, and discussion about further reductions can occur on Tuesday's meeting and could be operationalized starting Thursday of next week.

Kearns & West asked if the SPG needed any updates. The group agreed that since no additional redds were in danger of dewatering beyond those already identified, additional notification did not need to occur.

Adjournment

USST will meet next on Tuesday, September 12, 10–11 a.m.